

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8500

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

AMCONGEN DANANG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL FRANCE

AMCONGEN BIEN HOA

AMCONGEN CAN THO

AMCONGEN NHA TRANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 3922

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS PFOR, PINT, VS

SUBJECT: PROFESSOR NGUYEN NOC HUY DISCUSSES UPCOMING PARIS
NEGOTIATIONS AND INTERNAL SOUTH VIETNAMESE POLITICS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: HUY SAID MARCH 9 THAT HE EXPECTS THE UPCOMING
PARIS NEGOTIATIONS TO BE PROTRACTED. THE MAIN PROBLEM WILL BE
ARRIVING AT " GUARANTEES". SATISFYING THE FEARS OF BOTH SIDES CONCERN-
ING THE INTENTIONS OF THE OTHER. THE ISSUE OF NVA WITHDRAWALS MAY
BE SOLVABLE THROUGH A FORMULA OF DEMOBILIZATION IN PLACE. REGARD-
ING INTERNAL SOUTH VIETNAMESE POLITICS, HUY SAID THE PNM IS STILL
FREE TO OPPOSE THIEU DESPITE HIS OWN PRESENCE ON THE DELGATION.
HE THINKS THIEU WILL NOT STRICTLY ENFORCE DL 060 FOR A WHILE. THE
PNM IS WORKING OUT AN ALLIANCE WITH FOUR OTHER PARTIES. END SUM-
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MARY.

UPCOMING PARIS NEGOTIATIONS

1. PROFESSOR NGUYEN NGOC HUY. HEAD OF THE MODERATELY OPPOSITIONIST PROGRESSIVE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT, WILL TRAVEL TO PARIS MARCH 12 OR 13 WITH THE GVN DELEGATION THAT HAS JUST BEEN SELECTED FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PRG. HE MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS TO AN EMBASSY OFFER MARCH 9.
2. PROFESSOR HUY STATED THAT THE MANDATE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE BROAD. THE TALKS ARE SUPPOSED TO PRODUCE THE AGREEMENT ON "THE INTERNAL MATTERS OF SOUTH VIETNAM" ENVISAGED IN ARTICLE 12 OF THE JANUARY 27 TRUCE AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, HE BELIEVED THAT THE BARGAINING WOULD CERTAINLY EXTEND BEYOND THE NINETY DAYS SUGGESTED IN THE JANUARY 27 ACCORD. HE EXPECTED TO BE IN PARIS SEVERAL MONTHS, BECAUSE THERE WOULD BE A FAIRLY LENGTHY INITIAL PERIOD IN WHICH THE TWO SIDES WOULD STAKE OUT POSITIONS SHARPLY OPPOSED TO EACH OTHER BEFORE THE "INTIMATE" BARGAINING COULD OCCUR.
3. HUY THOUGHT THAT THE CENTRAL PROBLEM IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE THE QUESTION OF "GUARANTEES". BY THIS HE MEANT THAT EACH SIDE FEARS THE OTHER, BELIEVING THAT ITS ADVERSARY WILL SEEK AN EARLY OCCASION TO SUBVERT ITS POSITION AND ATTACK ITS PERSONNEL. THE NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT WILL HAVE TO SATISFY THE CONCERNS OF BOTH PARTIES ON THIS SCORE SOMEHOW. CONCERNING NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOP WITHDRAWALS, HUY UNDERSTOOD THAT PRESIDENT THIEU HAD RECENTLY TOLD A CORRESPONDENT OF PARIS MATCH THAT A DEMOBILIZATION IN PLACE OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS WOULD BE SATISFACTORY, THUS PRESUMABLY ELIMINATING THE REQUIREMENT THAT THEY WITHDRAW TO THE NORTH. HUY HAD NOT YET SEEN THE TEXT OF THE PARIS MATCH INTERVIEW, BUT HE IMPLIED THAT THIS WAS AN INTERESTING CONCEPT. HUY ADDED THAT HE AND THE OTHER DELEGATION MEMBERS HAD NOT YET BEEN BRIEFED BY PRESIDENT THIEU ON THE GVN'S NEGOTIATING TACTICS. HE EXPECTED TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE.
4. HUY DID NOT COMMENT ON THE QUALITY OF THE GVN DELEGATION. HE SAID ONLY THAT THE CHOICE OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER VIEN AS THE DELEGATION'S HEAD SHOWED THE GOVERNMENT'S SERIOUSNESS, BECAUSE VIEN WAS THE HIGHEST RANKING GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL WHO COULD BE EXPECTED TO LEAVE VIETNAM FOR A LENGTHY

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PERIOD. CONCERNING HIS OWN INCLUSION ON THE DELEGATION, HUY BELIEVED THIEU HAD NAMED HIM SIMPLY BECAUSE HE WAS KNOWN TO BE A MODERATE OPPOSITION LEADER WHO COULD REPRESENT GROUPS OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT AND YET WHO WOULD NOT SAY ANYTHING "DAMAGING" TO THE GOVERNMENT.

INTERNAL SOUTH VIETNAMESE POLITICS

5. HUY STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT HIS ACCEPTANCE OF A PLACE ON THE

DELEGATION DID NOT CHANGE THE INDEPENDENT PNM POSITION IN ANY WAY. THE PNM STILL REGARDED ITSELF AS FREE TO CRITICIZE GOVERNMENT POLICIES WHENEVER IT DEEMED SUCH A POSITION NECESSARY. IN REPLY TO A SPECIFIC QUESTION, HUY SAID HE HAD NOT CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT THE STRONG CRITICISMS OF THIEU THAT HE HAD MADE TO THE SAME EMBASSY OFFICER IN A CONVERSATION ON FEBRUARY 18 (SEE SAIGON 2534).

6. HUY STILL DOUBTED THAT PRESIDENT THIEU WOULD AGREE TO AMEND DECREE LAW 060 GOVERNING POLITICAL PARTIES. HOWEVER, HUY WAS SOMEWHAT MORE RELAXED ABOUT THIS THAN ON FEBRUARY 18, SAYING HE HAS CONCLUDED THAT THIEU WILL NOT STRICTLY APPLY THE PROVISIONS OF DL 060 FOR A WHILE. THAT IS TO SAY, WHEN MARCH 27 COMES THE GOVERNMENT WILL REFRAIN FROM FORCING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE EXISTING PARTIES WHO HAVE NOT QUALIFIED BY THAT TIME. THIEU WILL SIMPLY LET THE MATTER RIDE AS LONG AS HE NEEDS THE GOOD WILL OF THESE PARTIES IN THE " POLITICAL STRUGGLE". HUY ADDED WITH SOME IRONY THAT WHEN THIEU' S NEED FOR THIS GOOD WILL HAS PASSED, AT THAT POINT HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO CRACK DOWN HARD UNDER DL 060. BUT IN ANY CASE THE PARTIES WILL HAVE A BREATHING SPELL.

7. THE PNM' S OWN PLANS, HUY STATED, ARE CRYSTALIZING ALONG THE LINES OF AN ALLIANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING POLITICAL PAROIES: (A) THE UNIFIED FACTION OF THE VNQDD; (B) THE HOA HAO POLITICAL PARTY LED BY DEPUTY NGUYEN VAN CA; (C) THE REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PARTY BASED ON THE CAO DAI; AND (D) THE CATHOLIC- ORIENTED PEOPLE' S NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTIN FORCE LED BY LAWYER LE TRONG QUAT. HUY ADDED THAT COOPERATION WITH GROUPS LIKE THE REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIETS HAD PROVED IMPOSSIBLE, BECAUSE OF THESE GROUPS' EXTREME OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENT THIEU.

8. ASKED ABOUT POSSIBLE TIES TOWARD OTHER CATHOLIC GROUPSAND TOWARD THE BUDDHISTS, HUY SAID THAT BOTH THE CATHOLICS AND AN
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QUANG ARE CURRENTLY DIVIDED IN THEIR POLITICAL ATTITUDE. AN QUANG IS FACING A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT INTERNAL PROBLEM, HE NOTED, AGGRAVATED BY THE RECENT DEATHS OF THE TWO AN QUANG LEADERS. AS HE SAW IT, THERE ARE THREE AN QUANG FACTIONS VYING FOR SUPREMACY: TWO FACTIONS OF CENTRAL VIENTAMESE BONZES TAKING TWO EXTREME BUT OPPOSITE POSITIONS - NAMELY A POLICY OF RECONCILIATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT (AN ATTITUDE HUY ATTRIBUTED TO THICH THIEN MINH) AND A POLICY OF EXTREME OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT - AND A THIRD FACTION OF SOUTHERNERS WHO ARE MODERATES. THEPNM HAS NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FIND A BASIS FOR COOPERATION WITH AN QUANG, AND IF IT DID THE ONLY POSSIBILITY WOULD BE THROUGH SOME CONNECTION WITH THE MODERATE SOUTHERNERS.
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